

ADAPTING BASEBALL TO THE NEEDS
OF THE BLIND.

J. P. Lang.

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HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**



The National Recreation Association will make available to anyone requesting them a copy of the rules of sound baseball and a diagram of the playing field used in this modification of the game which is being used so successfully in San Francisco.

Adapting Baseball to the Needs of the Blind

By J. P. LANG
Supervisor of Athletics
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IN AN EFFORT to provide physical activity for blind people, the San Francisco Recreation Department has included in its athletic program a sound baseball game. The game was originated by R. V. Chandler, Superintendent of the Industrial Home for the Adult Blind of California which is located in Oakland, California. It has been experimented with by the inmates of the Industrial Home and has proven quite successful. Since adopting this activity the athletic staff of the San Francisco Recreation Department has worked consistently with the blind and now has several teams using the equipment.

The game is quite simple and is played with eleven men on each team, the only seeing person being the pitcher. Inasmuch as he has sight he is not included as a regular member of the team and is not allowed a time at bat, nor can he field the ball.

The nine players in the field line up an equal distance apart facing home plate. They kneel on a continuous pad placed five feet immediately back of the base paths between first and second,

and second and third bases. When the game is called for play they are to be on their knees and in a position to field the ball when it is batted in their direction.

The base paths are constructed of round wooden dolls three feet in width and thirty-three feet in length, each doll being separated by three-quarters of an inch. These paths tie into the wooden bases thirty inches square which are open to release sound. There is a bell or buzzer of a different tone located under each base, which is used as a signal for the batters and runners and to indicate the location for the fielders. The bases are bevelled on each side to prevent obstruction of the ball. The ball is seventeen inches in circumference with jinglers inside for sound. The ball is rolled by the pitcher to the batter who listens intently for the approach of the ball and attempts to hit it with a standard outdoor hockey stick. When the ball is hit, the buzzer at the closest base to which the ball is being directed rings as a warning to the fielders that the ball is located in their territory.

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of the individual, and of applying to it all available energy and persistence. The adventure at once becomes the foundation upon which more extended success is built.

All this, to be sure, is an old truism, but it takes on new significance when we realize that it means for the individual a statement of self respect, a sense of comradeship with others in a common adventure, often a public appreciation of value to society, a stimulating substitute for formal employment. But the danger, I say, is that owing to the fear, hesitation and lack of knowledge as to how to proceed, the individual never gets under way with anything. So many people want to write, to act, to paint, to sculpture, to engage in handicrafts, to be of service. Ambitions toward such goals, especially now in time-free adults, are amazingly widespread. Counted in millions today, such people have, it is estimated, increased five fold since 1930. You only have to show the results of your own labors to them and they say, almost wistfully, "I wish I could do that." And for the moment they do. But when they learn that creative accomplishment requires discipline, persistence, insight, and long periods of tedious elaboration, they fall by the wayside for lack of the will to expend the necessary energy. It takes a dogged wrestling with the fates to achieve the "integrity of one's own soul." So I say, begin easily, choose a project within reach, climb slowly, achieve solidly. The satisfactions of patient endeavor should never be dissipated. Otherwise passivity and indifference may contribute as an obstacle to social welfare in this country.

A third danger lurks in our lack of imagination as to the possibilities of leisure. Not long ago, in Des Moines, Iowa, as similarly, I know, in Rochester, New York, a hobby show was held. Now hobbies are only one form of leisure activity. But what happened was amazing. The show was started as a leap year adventure by a department store in one case and as a museum project in the other, and confined exclusively to men. At first the men were timid and sent in their wives with entries. Later they came openly. Presently contributions became an avalanche as newsboy and millionaire, store

clerk and banker, brought in his own handwork—anything from collections of coins to antique furniture. Over a thousand articles were submitted. Space had to be roped off and attendants placed to direct visitors. Educators came filled with curiosity and remained to admire. One man who had done his puttering in secret, suddenly found himself with city-wide and state-wide recognition—certainly an ego-satisfaction of real import to him.

It is unnecessary here to list the exhibits. There were hundreds of them from model ships to hand woven rugs, from prints to—*mirabile dictu*—embroidery, from collecting stamps to collecting beetles and old glass. The point to realize is the variety. It opens one's eyes to the number of such legitimate secondary interests, and confirms the opinion that no one need lack suggestions as to how to use his time profitably. And yet the danger is that we do not advertise this wealth in avocational possibilities. The failure is in part a failure of imaginative and directive power, which too constant insistence from sources of standardized stimulation has produced. We have often failed to see leisure as necessary and formative; now, when we must depend upon the imaginative flexibility which its proper use should have engendered, we are hopelessly inadequate and prosaic.

Avoiding Pitfalls in Leisure

These dangers, then, are inherent in the possession of leisure. How can we avoid them? How reap the fullest reward from those years of freedom which almost certainly will crown the lives of thousands of us? The answer is in one sense simple; its challenge to fulfillment more difficult. By way of summary and conclusion, I suggest the following:

(1) We should, I believe, take regular vacations long before the period of retirement begins. We should learn the taste of leisure, have some acquaintance with its essential problems, estimate in some part its rewards.

(2) We should, I believe, launch really stimulating avocational interests early in life in order that the transition to such interests at the time of retirement may be made easy. Only in

"A person who has rarely, if ever, played, who has been over-serious, over-strenuous, and has become stale and humorless, looks forward to retirement, often plans for it, but when the plan is realized he is apt to go to pieces immediately and rapidly. Why? Because he is a confirmed, chronic specialist in work and has no other interests. Take that away from him and he is lost. Without work his self-importance dies of starvation. He has leisure but he doesn't know what to do with it, for he has lost the ability to play as well as the opportunity to work, and consequently is a thoroughly miserable person." — *Austen Fox Riggs*.

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portunity to learn a new discipline, to increase aesthetic appreciation, to become an authority in some field. Life, in short, becomes progressive, integrative, leading one constantly to review his philosophy, to add new reaches of meaning and experience to it. All this builds into character the stuff of which real personality is made; and that, I take it, is the true function of leisure.

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They listen for the approach of the ball and after making a catch attempt to throw the runner out at the closest base. All that is necessary for the put out is that the ball pass in front of the runner prior to his touching the base.

The buzzers for the various bases are operated from a control box located behind home plate by one of the officials of the game.

Each batter is allowed five strikes and five balls. Balls and strikes are determined by the umpire who is a seeing person. He rules upon the pitch in relation to its passage over the home plate, which is divided into three lanes. Players bat from one of the three lanes depending upon stance etc. in relation to the position of home plate.

In the games played to date the scores have been quite large, proving that the batter does hear the approach of the ball and is able to hit it. The big weakness now is that the ball travels with such speed that the players are unable to locate it fast enough. However, the players feel that within a short time, with practice, they will be able to play a much better game.

Fees and Charges for Public Park Services

(Continued from page 603)

It takes time to bring full realization to the whole population of the value of their state and national parks and the benefits and enjoyment they have in store for them. As the number of park visitors grows, so will the popular sentiment for their retention and support increase. I believe that all visitors to our state and national parks cannot help but be impressed most favorably as they enter a park to register at the gate or contact stations and receive a courteous greeting of welcome from the ranger who is well-informed and willing to furnish them guidance and advice about the park and how to see it to the best advantage.

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Does not the name "State and National Parks" convey the meaning that they are the public's property, and is it not strange that the public should be required to pay an admission fee to enter such property? Let there be a reasonable charge for all special accommodations, privileges, and facilities that may be offered within the park, but do not exact a toll from the public to get into and enjoy by ordinary travel and observation the beauty, nature's gifts, inspiration, and happiness which the scenic attractions convey, and for the conservation and enjoyment of which the parks have been acquired at the expense of the public at large. The road fee charged at some national parks is a misnomer. It is an unjustified admission charge, pure and simple. . . .

I believe it is not so much a well-grounded feeling that the great public in general will resent such admission charges that is the cause of the reluctance with which most park administrators, I believe, look upon this movement to collect sustaining revenue of this character, as it is the conviction that in principle such charges have no justification, constitute a wrong application of authority, and are an imposition. I trust I am not wrong in this assumption and hope that such a contention among park men will prevail.

What They Say About Recreation

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other branch of education, in spite of the fact that in our schools the people who come to study arithmetic go in by the front door, and those who come to play basketball go in the side door. As soon as the public recognizes that the recreation program is just as important as any other part of education, then we will have a real educational program."—Mark McCloskey in *Child Study*, April 1938.

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Hatchet and Cherry Blossoms

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triangle, blindfold her, turn her around three times, and tell her to advance eight steps and curtsy to Washington. The girl who succeeds in doing this is rewarded with an old-fashioned nosegay.

Quaker Meeting. Guests are seated in rows and warned not to laugh or speak out loud during this game. The person on the right end of each row must shake hands with the one on her left and whisper to her some absurd thing to do such as, "Thee is to walk sedately to the front and set Sister Agatha's kerchief straight." Each one passes this message on, accompanied by a handshake, to the next person. The one at the end of the row is to carry out the whispered bidding as she has heard it. Any one who laughs or makes undue noise must rise and stand facing the wall until the game is over.

Truth. Cut pictures from magazines which illustrate common phrases not literally true. Patch pictures together if necessary to get complete phrase. Number them and pin them on the wall. How many can guess the meanings as George Washington would have seen them? Examples are "Her eyes fell to the floor" (eyes cut out and

dropping to floor); "She went all to pieces" (person cut in pieces); "She ran across a man" (car on top of man); "She devoured a book" (person holding a book with a bite out of it). Others are "drank in the music," "swept into the room," "burst into tears," "time flew by."

Writing Lists. Have some writing games. For instance you can see who can make the most words out of "George Washington," "Martha Washington," or "Revolutionary."

Any one of these three parties can be given successfully and made worthy of the occasion if you but keep in mind that it must be centered around the things that are generally associated with Washington and colonial times.

Cutting the Cloth to Fit the Pattern

(Continued from page 608)

Assuming that you have decided on a program that will use up all your facilities, money or leadership, your work is only partly done because the preparation of the groups or the community for this program is a determining factor of its success. May I give an example of what I mean?

Several attempts had been made in Kenosha before the present recreation director took office to organize and operate a civic orchestra. Friction between union musicians and non-union players, fear on the part of the unions, and misunderstanding caused a collapse in a very short time. When we decided to introduce the activity, a great deal of time was spent with both of these groups working out very clearly and definitely policies and misunderstandings, and at the present time we have the union and non-union players sitting side by side in a civic orchestra. As a matter of fact, the president of the local union played in the orchestra for several years.

Choruses have been attempted and failed because factional groups broke up the harmony in the activity. If we had selected as the director of our choral society a leader from one of the church choirs, friction would no doubt have developed but the plan of choosing a leader from outside existing organizations has worked harmoniously for several years.

The program, to grow and prosper, must be built slowly and on the same dignified basis as education. Do not overadvertise and thereby cheapen your department. Cooperate with other agencies; you will find them willing to cooperate with you. Your business as a recreation director is to see that your town as far as possible has adequate

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